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Contact: Kevin Kerstein  
Publicity Manager  
Churchill Downs Racetrack  
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)  
(502) 635-4712 (office)  
[Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com](mailto:Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com)

## **BLOODSTOCK AGENT GARY YOUNG REACHES 'RACING'S PINNACLE' PICKING DERBY WINNER MEDINA SPIRIT**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, May 8, 2021)** – Veteran bloodstock agent **Gary Young** is still living on a proverbial Cloud Nine following **Medina Spirit's** victory in last Saturday's \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I).

Young, who is based in Southern California, purchased the Florida-bred **Protonico** colt for a mere \$35,000 as a 2-year-old at the 2020 OBS July Sale for **Amr Zedan**.

"Jockey **Victory Espinoza** actually helped bridge the relationship with Mr. Zedan," Young said. "He's a lifelong horse lover and he felt like he wanted to get back in the game. He met **(Bob) Baffert** in Saudi Arabia a couple years ago and he decided to take another swing at the game. The first sale we went to (2020 OBS April) he gave me a budget of \$1 million and I got there that day and sometimes you hear rumblings about potential top sales prices around the sale. I called him about the two horses we marked down and told him there was a chance we wouldn't get both for that price and one may go for more than the budget."

Young was correct and their first purchase was future Grade I-winning filly **Princess Noor**, who dropped the hammer at \$1.35 million. Princess Noor subsequently retired at the end of 2020 due to an injury but was pronounced in foal Friday to top stallion **Into Mischief**.

Following Princess Noor's purchase, Young returned to the sales ring to the rescheduled OBS July Sale. Because the sale was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Young only had 12 horses marked down in his catalogue to look at following the breeze preview days.

"After the last day of the preview I walked out of the sale similar to **Rocky Balboa** walking back to the corner after **Apollo** beat him up," Young said. "I called Mr. Zedan and he asked me if I remember seeing a horse by Protonico breeze. It was easy to remember because there was only one horse by Protonico in the sale and he was one of the 12 horses I wrote down to look at. He told me his friend stands the stallion and asked if I could go look at him."

"In his sales breeze he kept his rhythm very well to the wire and actually continued out well to the seven-eighths pole. I have the catalogue of that sale and on the page for (Medina Spirit) I wrote, 'natural router stride.'"

When Young arrived to look at Medina Spirit prior to the sale, he noted his dark color like his sire Protonico. On the day of the sale, Young purchased Medina Spirit and he was shipped to Southern California to Baffert.

"I'm glad Mr. Zedan chose me to work with but even more importantly he chose Bob," Young quipped.

Young arrived to Louisville eight days prior to this year's Kentucky Derby – the same time his prized purchase walked off the van to begin his final preparation for the "Run for the Roses."

"I kept coming home to the hotel room all week knowing this horse would run well," Young said. "In the Derby, I knew there wasn't a lot of speed inside of us. We knew **Mandaloun** had some speed but we thought **Brad (Cox)** would instruct **(Florent Geroux)** get him to relax. **Rock Your World**, who I considered our main opposition, got left leaving the gate."

"Down the backside you start looking around who's traveling well behind you. I could see Mandaloun was a different horse than the Louisiana Derby. He was probably pulling more than you like but he was running. Then, I noticed **Flavien (Prat)** on **Hot Rod Charlie** was traveling beautifully. **Essential Quality** was a little further out than Medina Spirit, Mandaloun and Hot Rod Charlie."

Young's mere \$35,000 purchase gamely turned back his rivals down the stretch for a half-length victory in the Kentucky Derby.

"I remember seeing Mr. Zedan after the race just fall to his knees in pure jubilation," Baffert said. "What a humble man. We couldn't be happier for him."

Young was noticeably hoarse Sunday morning following the Derby celebration.

"You can't put into words what winning the Kentucky Derby means," Young said. "Life has been so good to me. I've been around so many talented people and horses. In the past I've been fortunate enough to win many Grade I races but there's only one Kentucky Derby and I'll remember that moment for my entire life."

Medina Spirit will face his next test in next Saturday's Preakness Stakes (GI) at Pimlico. He returned to training Wednesday at Churchill Downs and will ship to Baltimore Monday afternoon.

**TV SCHEDULE** – Churchill Downs Racing is scheduled to air every raceday on “**America’s Day at the Races**” on the Fox Sports family of networks. Here is this week’s TV Schedule:

- Saturday: Fox Sports 2 (2-6:30 p.m.)  
(live stream on YouTube starts at 12:30 p.m. at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKrAaGpcHQ4>)
- Sunday: Fox Sports 2 (12:30-6 p.m.)

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – Racing continued Saturday at Churchill Downs with a first post of 12:45 p.m. The 11-race card featured an \$8,418 carryover in the Super Hi 5 (Race 11). ... Sunday’s Mother’s Day program will get underway at 12:45 p.m. Tickets are available at [www.churchilldowns.com/tickets](http://www.churchilldowns.com/tickets). ... There were 124 horses that recorded published workouts Saturday morning at Churchill Downs including 2020 Preakness Stakes (GI) winner **Swiss Skydiver** who cruised a half-mile in :46.80. ... Trainer **Bret Calhoun** reported 2020 Kentucky Derby third-place finisher **Mr. Big News** returned to his Churchill barn Thursday to begin training for his 4-year-old campaign. ... Canadian-based trainer **Josie Carroll** has a limited number of horses currently stabled at Churchill Downs for the Spring Meet. She’s stabled in Barn 27. ... “For more information about the Spring Meet, visit <https://www.churchilldowns.com/calendar/featured-events/>.

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